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AND

IDYLLS

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WM. LEE

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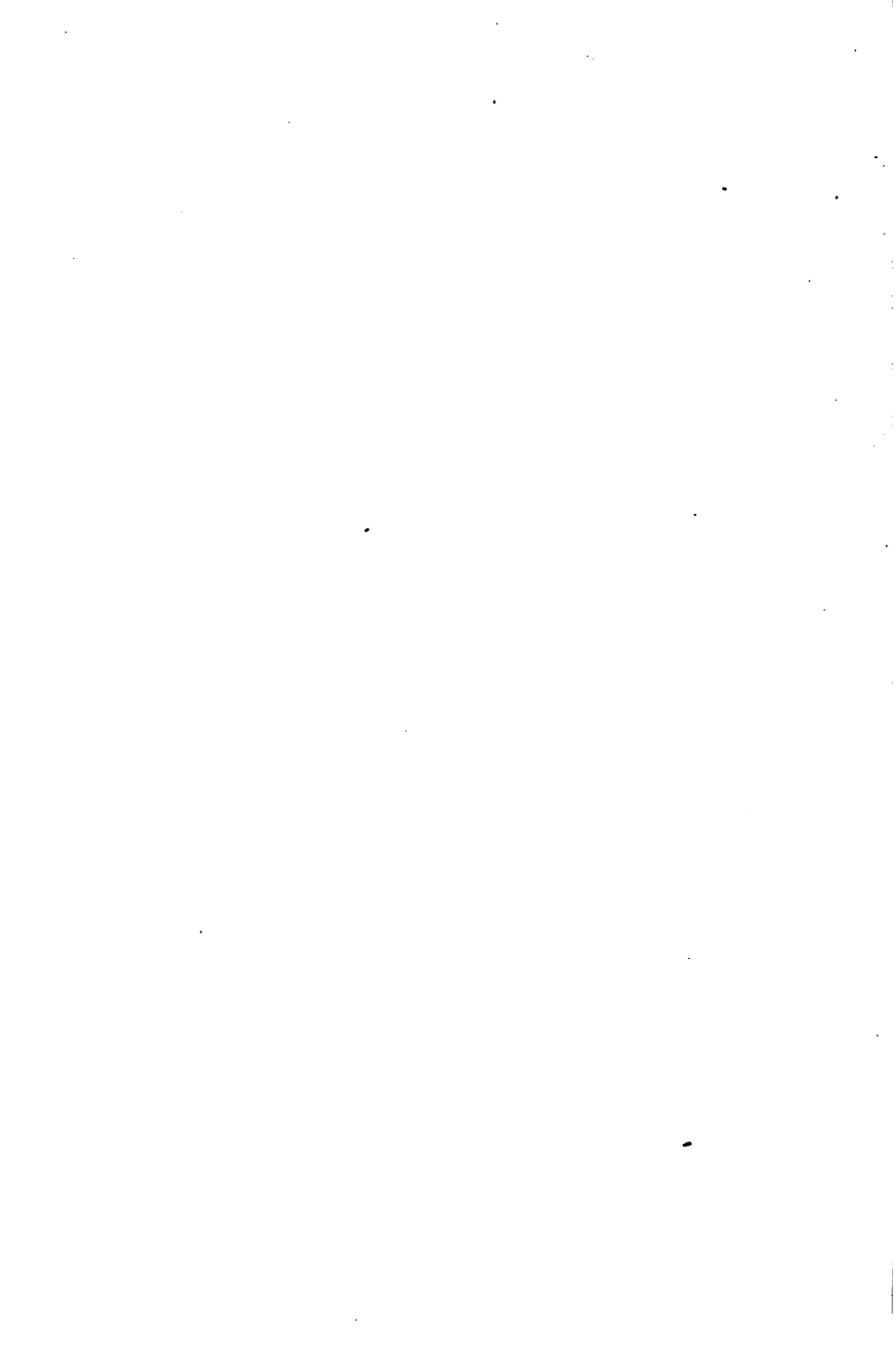
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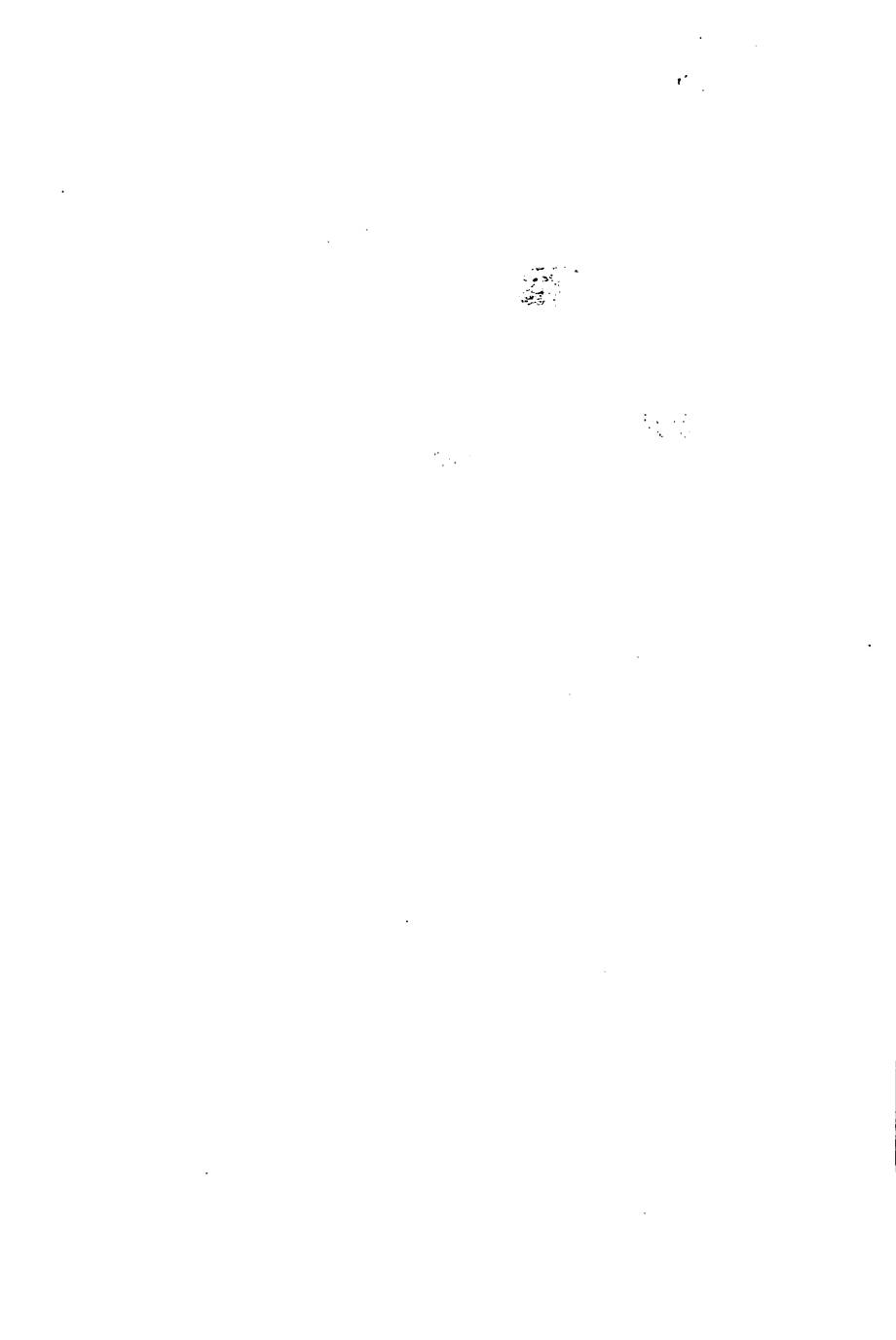
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CURRENT MODERN POETRY
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MORRIS GRAY
CLASS OF 1877



3/6



POEMS AND IDYLLS.





Yours truly
William Lee

POEMS AND IDYLLS.

BY

WILLIAM LEE,

GALSTON.

* * *

Kilmarnock :

DUNLOP & DRENNAN, PRINTERS, "STANDARD" OFFICE.

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June 14, 1934

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TO MY FRIEND

ROBERT YOUNG,

GALSTON,

AUTHOR OF "GALSTON CHARACTERS,"

HIMSELF, IN A HIGHER SENSE, AMONG THE NOBLE BAND

OF CHARACTERS WHICH GALSTON HAS PRODUCED,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

In putting before the public in book form the different effusions which go to make up this little volume, I offer no apology, for well I know that anything I might say will in nowise raise or lower the opinion of the critic.

The blemishes which mark the work throughout are well known to the author, yet I cling to the hope that out of the debris there will be found as much as will save it from being termed an infliction.

Should it be found by the unbiassed reader, even in the smallest degree, to have assisted in embellishing the poetic literature of my beloved land, my end is served, and I will look on such a finding as compensation far above rubies. Should it come under the eye of the "learned pundit," I beseech him not to throw it in the waste bin without perusal, though he discovers, as he will at a glance, that the author lacks the advantage of a University education, for he is one who thinks that "poets are born, not made."

With these remarks I would say: Go forth thou true, sweet outcome of my leisure hours, hours snatched from the laborious yet congenial task of breadmaking; nor hang your rough-hewn, honest head, though the chilling blasts of criticism blow ashes in your face.

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POEMS AND IDYLLS.

TO MOTHER : A QUESTION.

“ Is this the burn, the wimpling burn,
Which long, long years ago
Did nightly lull me into sleep
With murmurs soft and low ?
And that the cot, in ruins now,
Where first I saw the light,
All free from care, a bootless bairn,
I romped from morn till night ?”

“ This is the spot, my grey-grown boy,
That marks where you were born ;
And that's the burn that lulled to sleep,
And waked you at the morn.
Oh blessed Sabbath morn was that
When first I heard your voice,
The birds from out that hawthorn hedge
Sang out, ‘ Rejoice ! Rejoice !’

“ And meet it was the passing winds
Should blow o'er hill and dale,
That such a child as you were born
In this delightful dale.
Though fifty years have come and gone
And I am old and worn,
It seems to me but yesterday
Since you, my boy, were born.”

HIS CHOICE.

She found him in the crowded street,
Twice twenty years ago ;
She kissed his brow and whispered sweet—
“ A gift I would bestow.
Take this, my child—this tiny harp ;
You ask by whom 'tis given ;
Its every note, both flat and sharp,
Is one sweet gift of Heaven.

“ Now touch the strings, my favour'd child,
Nor be the least afraid.”
He swept them o'er, the goddess smiled
At what the boy had played.
“ Go now, my choice, through street and lane,
In sunshine and in shower ;
But should'st thou sing for hope of gain,
Your harp will lose its power.”

Forth went the lad through street and lane,
In sunshine and in shower ;
He swept the harp, and not in vain—
Some own'd its witching power ;
And others passed, with flying feet,
To where men bought and sold ;
One worldling said, “ Your song is sweet,
But will it bring you gold ?”

When Night had spread her sable pall,
The minstrel sought his shed ;
He hung his harp upon the wall,
But felt its power had fled.

“ Farewell, my harp, thou soul of love,
Your strings I’ll tune no more ;
To roam with thee would ne’er remove
The sting of being poor.

“ Oh, spirit pure that kissed my brow
And gave me power to sing,
I know that thou’lt disown me now
Who might have been a king.”
A moment o’er his form she bent,
A tear bedimm’d her eye,
The laurel from his brow she rent,
And left him with a sigh.

Next morn beheld him in the mart
Where merchants seek for gain ;
One golden coin, it gave a start,
And soon he made it twain.
On rolled the years, and still he sold,
And keenly plied his art ;
But though he now had gotten gold
He was not glad at heart ;

For still the harp hung on his wall,
Reminder of his choice,
And oft when lone he would recall
The vision’s kindly voice,

He heard it in the hush of night
And in the hum of day,
He heard it in the waning light
That calls the child from play.

He heard it in the thunder's roar
And in the lightning's gleam,
He heard it on the silv'ry shore
And in the gurgling stream,
He heard it in the crowded street
And in sequestered lane,
Where long ago he'd played so sweet
His loved but lost refrain.

With shame he view'd his golden hoard,
And asked what bliss it gave ;
His conscience quick gave back the word
"Thou art its bonded slave !"
"A slave," he cried, "I'll be no more
To pleasure false and vain."
He seized his harp, he swept it o'er,
And found his lost refrain.

"Oh, soul of love," the minstrel cried,
"No more from thee I'll stray ;
Be thou till death my constant guide
And burden of each lay ;
By stream and strath, by wood and wold,
In crowded street and lane,
In summer's heat and winter's cold,
I'll tune your strings again."

“ Go now,” she said, “ nor turn aside
From cottage, tower, or hall ;
An unseen hand your steps will guide,
And nightly find a stall ;
O’er hill and dale, o’er moor and fen,
Or where the cities gleam,
If thou would’st touch the heart of men,
The love of God’s your theme !”

A SHOOTING EPISODE.

LINES WRITTEN BY REQUEST OF J. M. ROBERTSON,
CONVEYING AN INVITATION TO HIS ANNUAL
SHOOTING PARTY AT WEE CARLEITH, TO
BAKER LEE.

Get ready for Carleith, Dear Lee,
Upon the 5th October ;
For J. M. wants you there to be,
To keep the party sober.

Now that you've Angling laurels won,
And put old Young to rout ;
Lay by your Rod, and buy a Gun
And show them how to shoot.

Though yet you have not used a gun,
Yet this we well do know :
You often have great honours won
By pulling the long bow.

So come and get yourself a gun,
And hie to Wee Carleith,
And then we'll write the deeds you've done
To Stewart and to Keith.

REPLY TO J. M. R.

Richt pleased was I to get your note
In rhyme so sweetly spun,
Although you ken I'm nae great shot,
I'm awfu' fond o' fun.

I'll watch the whisky, bread and ham.
And see that a' gangs richt,
E'en to the drinkin' o' a'dram—
For every beast they fricht.

And should the sport fa' dull a wee
I'll tell you what to try !
Just drink the health o' " Baker Lee,"
And ask him to reply.

Then he'll drink yours and on we'll gang
Till gloamin' gars us think
It's time that we had Shedden's sang,
And finished up the drink.

I dinna think I'll buy a gun,
They're dangerous things, and dear ;
I'm perfect sure that I'll get fun
By working wi'the brier.

Auld " Gravitation," man o' sense,
When he was young and puir,
The Brier-Bus was his sole expense,
And wha could slaughter mair ?

When Frost for weeks had stoppit wark,
And poortith pinched his face,
He'd cut his stick before the dark,
Slip oot and nail his brace.

Though hunners noo he earns a year,
And keeps baith dog and gun,
He'll tell you nocht can beat the brier
For guid auld-fashioned fun.

It tickles them, it nettles them,
It makes them squirt and fling;
And when at last it settles them,
Fast to your wand they cling.

Like him I'll bring a prickly stick,
And when the day is done,
You'll maybe see that I can lick
The lads that use the gun.

ODE TO J. M. ROBERTSON AND SHOOTING
PARTY.

CANTO I.

Sweet broke the morn o'er Wee Carleith,
As J. M.'s frien's did gather,
Each man intent on dealing death
Among the fur and feather.

The first to point their guns in air
Were J. M. and young Charlie ;
When Angus cried, " Mark ! there's a hare,
Now, see you tak' her fairlie !"

Bang gaed one gun, and bang gaed two,
But Meg, she still kept rinnin' ;
Then Shedden cried, " I think they're fou,
The pinch* will send her spinnin'."

Aff gaed the pinch, the bogland shook,
The sportsmen winked at ither ;
But when they took ae last fond look,
Fleet Meg still spanked the heather.

She's spanking yet, and spank she will
For ocht the pinch did till her ;
'Twill tak' a man o'better skill
Than Shedden yet to kill her.

* The name by which Shedden's gun was known.

The next to take his deadly aim
Was gallant Captain Cartridge ;
The gun went off, the shot gaed hame,
And downwards fell a partridge.

Then cried the Captain, " Fall in line !
And each man mind his dressing.
We'll beat the wood, and then we'll dine,
When LEE has asked a blessing.

CANTO II.

The luncheon o'er, the toasts gane through,
'Mid muckle fun and chaffin',
The party did their sport renew,
Aroun' aul' castle Daffin'.

The next to prove he was a shot
Guid's ony on the mairland,
Was ane wi' belly roun's a pot,
Wha rents a farm ca'd Blairland.

A bonnie birdie on the wing
Was what he meant to damage ;
But some declared the fatal sting
Was due to douce auld Ramage.

Fat farmer Clay prepared again
Although a wee thing crabbit ;
But, by my sang, he made it plain,
Wha killed that hinmost rabbit.

The Captain then gave out the word,
" Good friends, the sport is over,
Three cheers for every fud and bird
We've killed in Carleith cover.

And three times three, loud let it ring
For him wha brocht us hither ;
Lang may his heart incline to bring
Such merry souls together !"

THE ROBIN'S VISIT.

LINES SUGGESTED BY A VISIT OF A ROBIN RED-
BREAST IN A RECENT SNOWSTORM.

The year unto a close was drawin',
And fluffy snawflakes thick were fa'in',
And wild the surly blast was blawin',
 Snell through the moor ;
A wee bit bird, wi' feather pretty,
Wi' sparklin' een that pled for pity,
Fu' sadly sang this plaintive ditty
 Outside my door.

" When hills and dales are clad wi' snaw,
And Northern blasts their fiercest blaw,
I'm forced to seek the cot or ha'
 To beg a crum' ;
My wee bit sang is but a chatter,
To say ocht else you would but flatter,
A gratefu' heart I think far better
 Than sangs wi' some.

" Weel kent it is by a' wha claim
Auld Scotland as their native hame,
That Robin Redbreast is a name
 That's weel respeckit ;"

And if you're ane that owns the same,
Ye'll no' hae't said, an' that wi' shame,
That you or yours were e'er to blame,
Or Rob negleckit."

Heedless indeed, I micht ha'e heard
The dolefu' story o' this bird,
But, truth to tell, he'd touched a chord
My heart within ;
Langer I ween I couldna bide
To see the puir thing stan' ootside,
My cottage door I opened wide,
And bade him in.

Nae second bidding needed he ;
The joy that lit his bonny e'e
Showed me how proud he was to see
A cosy biel,
Whaur he could snugly sit and hear
The winds moan o'er the dying year,
Nor pangs o' cauld nor hunger fear
Beneath my shiel.

Oh, would that man such faith could place
In Him wha said, " Seek ye My face,
In time o' sin or sair disgrace,
I'll be your Frien'."
Go, go to Him, as this wee bird
Came in to me, and trust His word ;
His tenderest feelings will be stirred,
And a' forgi'en.

MY GRANNIE.

Speak kindly o' the orphan loon
That never leev'd wi' grannie ;
I'd ane was kent through a' the toon,
An' made o' me a mannie.

My mither dee'd when I was young,
But ere she left her lammie,
Her arms roon grannie's neck she flung,
An' said, " Be guid to Tammie."

She straik'd my pow, an' kissed me sweet,
An' lang she held my hannie ;
Her hinmost words were, " Dinna greet,
Ye'll jist gang hame wi' grannie."

She took me hame that very day
Death robbed me o' my mammie,
And on her knees I heard her pray
For her puir orphan Tammie.

That prayer was heard I hae nae doot,
Though spoken awfu' cannie,
For a' things seemed to turn aboot
For guid to me an' grannie.

Noo grannie's gane an' sleeps fu' soun'
Beside her dochter Nannie.
When my turn comes, just lay me doon
Beside my dear aul' grannie.

THE AUL' THACK HOOSE.

The aul' thack hoose whaur I was born
Sits close beside a burn,
Whaur birdies blythe frae early morn
Their love sangs sweetly turn.

And a' alang the burnie's lip
Green ferns and flowerets grow,
The bramble and the scarlet hip,
The hazel and the sloe.

But, oh, I'm wae to ken the hoose
Is tenantless and frail,
The lum's fa'en in, the rafters loose
Hang shiv'ring in the gale.

The garden's just a weedy plot
That grows nor fruit nor flower ;
One lilac bush yet marks the spot
Where stood the bairnies' bower.

But where are those who played wi' me
Within its leafy shade ?
Some still are sailing o'er life's sea,
And some at rest are laid.

Yet still in Mem'ry's hall I hear
Their merry voices peal ;
The fancied sound calls forth a tear,
Sad feelings o'er me steal.

Though far frae thee, my native place,
Nor likely to return,
There's nought but death can e'er efface
The thack hoose and the burn.

TO THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

Welcome, thou solemn midnight hour,
To thee belongs some mystic power
That morning pale or noonday bright
Knows nothing of. Oh queenly Night !
How sweet thou art when Luna's beams
Are dancing o'er the rippling streams,
And all the starry host are keeping
Vigils o'er the world that's sleeping.
Well fitted hour methinks thou art
For souls to leave their mortal part,
And in thy quiet quit this earth,
And soar to God who gave them birth ;
No more by worldly tempest driven,
For all is peace and calm in Heaven.

A WISH.

Oh ! if this life were one sweet round
Of man's best, dearest pleasures ;
We ne'er might seek nor try to sound
The depth of Heaven's treasures.

Content we'd live, contented roam,
Nor ever dream of dying,
Each new-found sphere would be a home
If souls knew nought of sighing.

Oh ! blessed Power that reigns above !
Wilt Thou not rend asunder
The veil which hides that life of love
Which wraps our souls in wonder ?

In vain the thought, it cannot be,
The veil will ne'er be riven,
Till we have crossed life's troubled sea
And anchored safe in Heaven !

EPISTLE TO MY FRIEN' DAVIE.

I'm proud to see you mind the well,
And oft in thocht draw near,
To think on frien's you liked to meet
Behind the Belvidere.
I ken you've springs among your hills
That bubble cool and clear,
But ah ! they mirror not the friends
You met at Belvidere.

When roses first display their bloom,
And woodbine scents the dell,
Like maidens coy you'll find them both
Half hidden, near the well.
When Summer bids the birdies sing
Sweet sangs that charm the ear,
The sweetest pipes in a' the grove
Are heard at Belvidere.

That we'll forget this hallowed spot
You need not have a fear,
In mem'ry oft we'll gather roun'
The well at Belvidere.
When dreaded Death has cut the thread,
And moved us from this sphere,
We'll meet beside a purer spring
Than that at Belvidere.

THE LASS O' DURRISDEER.

Though wintry winds like hungry wolves
Swept through the lonely glen,
Though blinding sleet and drenching rain
Fell thick o'er moor and fen,
Though moon and stars withheld their licht,
True love my course would steer,
I'd find a path would take me to
The lass o' Durrisdeer.

Her een are fu' o' life and love,
Her voice is rich and rare,
The winds that played amang the hills
Ne'er fanned a face so fair ;
Where'er I am by nicht or day
Her lovely form seems near,
I'd rather dee than live without
The lass o' Durrisdeer.

I hae nae store o' gathered gowd
To lay before my queen,
But I hae health and I hae love,
I'll wair them baith on Jean.
What manly swain wi' gifts sae guid
Need harbour doubt or fear,
I'll seek consent and wed the lass,
The lass o' Durrisdeer.

TO JOHN G——, SOUTH AFRICA, AND
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE OLD
GALSTON ANGLING CLUB.

DEAR SIR,

Look out your rod, look out your reel,
Your tackle and your willow creel,
Our first meet's at the Brig o' Stair,
That spans the gurgling Water Ayr.
We'll fix our rods below the dam,
And start the sport wi' ae guid dram.
Then up the stream we'll quately slip,
Its rippling breast we'll gently whip,
And should the water, win', and sky
Be a' in trim for fishing fly,
We'll get what we ne'er got before,
Our baskets filled and running o'er.
And when we've got the length of Clune,
We'll lay our rods and baskets doon ;
Then eat our piece and tak' a smoke,
And sing a sang, or crack a joke.
And then we'll lay the beauties out
To see wha's killed the biggest trout.
This done, again we'll pree the charm—
'Twill help to keep our aul' hearts warm.
Then back the way we cam', we'll go
Wi' cautious step and carefu' throw,
And should a parr or silver fry
Catch minnow, worm, or gaudy fly,

I dinna need to say to you
That you will prove a sportsman true.
And when the sun has kissed the west,
And ilka ane has done his best,
We'll tak' down rods, book, gut, or hair,
And quickly to the Inn repair.
And when we've dined on ham and eggs,
Till wames are bunged like brewers' kegs,
Wi' gladsome hearts we'll pay our fare,
Then cross the crookit Brig o' Stair.
We'll no be long o' scourin' hame,
Unless that some ane tak's the blame
O' drawing up before the Croon,
And stan'in' needless whiskies roun'.
But tak' my word, as sure as fate,
I'll see that naething keeps us late,
Whene'er we touch Tarbolton Street
We'll mak' the horses shift their feet.
By every hoose, baith dark and licht,
We'll flee, as if we'd got a fricht ;
We'll gar the aul' wives think the Deil
Is rowing every tail and wheel ;
Nor will we stop to strike a match,
To licht a pipe, or leuk a watch,
Until we've reached the Clinchyard mont
And see the Ga'ston lights in front.
Then to the driver we will say—
“ Now walk them canny down the Brae.”

Before the clock has chappit ten
We'll a' be safe at Black Bull-en',
Wi' Donal's roon we'll end the show,
Syne pay our fare, then hame we'll go.

AT THE GRAVE OF GEORGE PALMER, MY
FIRST SCHOOLMASTER.

Awake, sweet Muse, and once again
Tenderly the lyre touch,
Soft and sweet must be the strain,
For my hero's life was such.

'Twas not in fields where cannons roar
That Palmer's deeds were done,
No crimson stains his banner bore
To tell of battles won.

His field of fight was in the school,
His weapon was his word,
And ne'er did general better rule
With aid of glittering sword.

But silent now is Palmer's tongue,
In silence let it rest
Until the latest trump be rung,
And earth has rent her breast.

A few hot tears, and then I'll go,
Oh heart refuse them not,
Lift, lift thy sluice and let them flow
Upon this hallowed spot.



LOUDOUN KIRK.

AN IDYLL OF LOUDOUN KIRK.

Long before the pleasure was mine of looking with my own eyes upon the beautiful hamlet of Loudoun Kirk, I could have told you that it lies hidden in an out-of-the-way corner, deep down in the very heart of one of the loveliest of Scotland's valleys, that it consists of one row of one-storey cottages whose roofs are covered with thatch, and that here and there along the boulder stone side walk there stand (reminders of the Glacial Age) huge stones, upon which the grandfathers of the hamlet loved to sit out the long Summer afternoons, embowered in woodbine and roses, watching the glory of departing day, dreaming of a world fairer far than Loudoun Kirk, and of a sun that knows no setting. And I could have told you that the gardens behind the cottages sloped gently down to the edge of a burn whose moss-tinged colour showed that its starting point in life was far up among moss hags that once had been the hiding place and shelter of the conscientious Covenanter, and that it never wearied of singing the sweetest of songs. Only when it crosses the road does it lower its voice to a whisper as it steals round the lichen covered walls of the auld kirkyard, wherein stands the ruins of a chapel centuries old, and in whose vaults moulder all that is left of what was once the bravest of Scotland's brave, and the

fairest of her fair. All this I could have told you, and far more. Had I not heard it described by my city companion and truest of friends, Tom Lorimer, so often that its every feature was graven as deep in the tablets of my memory as the lines of my mother's face? But Tom was a poet, and one that might have earned for himself fame, and enriched the literature of his native land, had it not been that he believed that poetry and painting were the twin sisters of poverty. Hence the reason of my considering that the garments in which Tom draped everything in and around Loudoun Kirk was the outcome of his own poetic imagination. But a visit, some two years ago (in company with Tom) on a midsummer's day, caused me to discard for ever the thought that he, or any other poet, could give to this lovely spot a garment more glorious than that which is its very own.

Well do I remember that day when Tom and I rounded the bend of the brae, where I caught the first glimpse of the sweet little spot. I had no need to ask its name. Down in the hollow stood the cottages, against whose whitewashed walls the roses and the woodbine twined lovingly; the gardens behind; the gardens on the other side of the road; the burn creeping across the way and slipping noiselessly past the auld kirk-yard; the ruined chapel; the dark yew trees, whose sombre plumes waved mournfully in the summer scented breeze—all was there that I had

heard so much of, bathed in the glory of the Summer sun. Having viewed for some time in silence the fairy scene, I turned to Tom and said, "This is Loudoun Kirk." "Yes," cried he, "this is Loudoun Kirk, the spot that gave my sturdy forbears a cradle, and after they had played out honestly the parts allotted them in the drama of life, rewarded them with a coffin and a grave." Having quenched our thirst at the open well on the northern side of the burn, a well which was as dear to the heart of Tom as was the well of Bethlehem to the heart of King David, we climbed the narrow pathway that leads to Ladyha', the place where Tom was born. Strangers to Tom now owned what had been the possession of the Lorimers for generations. No wonder it was a spot dear, dear to Tom. Perched high above the hamlet and the burn it sits, half hidden from your view, within a clump of elms from whose branches the blackbird and the mavis delight to pour forth their first and last song of the season. Having looked with wonder and admiration from this eminence on the landscape that lay before us—or, as Tom put it, having filled our souls with delight by gazing on the beauty of the unfurled banner of Almighty God—we bade goodbye, and turned our steps towards the silent little city of the dead. The iron gate stood open. Unchallenged by human voice we entered, but the voices of many songsters gave us welcome. Unmolested, we walked through

the long green grass from tombstone to tombstone, spelling out the quaint and curious epitaphs of those who, like ourselves, had once lived and doubtless loved. Longer we would have stayed had not the lengthening shadows told us that we must be going. A parting look at the burying place of the Lorimers, and we made our exit as we had made our entrance.

Each busy with his own thoughts, we walked in silence up the brae. When we had reached that part of it from which we could get our parting look, instinctively we stopped and turned our faces. Tom grasped me with one hand, and raising the other, pointed to the place we had just left and exclaimed, "To know that, when I also have done with time, all that is left of me will be laid to rest down there, robs death of half its terror." Often have I wondered since, but I cannot tell, if at that moment he had a presentiment of an early dissolution, but this I do know,

Ere roses were again in bloom,
I stood beside his open tomb.

The next time that my feet kissed Loudoun Kirk brae it was covered over with the dead leaves of a departed Summer. The gardens were stripped of fruit and flower. The stems of the rose bushes, though withered and weary like, still clung to the walls of the cottages, but the roses which had throughout the long Summer day cheered the

hearts of the inmates by nodding to them through the window panes were all, all gone. The songsters of the grove had for a season ceased their singing and laid aside their pipes. The burn was swollen big by recent rains ; its voice was loud and harsh ; and the wild wail of a dying November shook the naked trees. Yet I would not have changed the scene though the power had been mine to do it, for all I saw and all I heard harmonised with the thoughts that surged within my sorrowing soul.

Once again I entered the kirkyard, but not alone ; the sexton, by appointment, met me. Greetings exchanged, we walked through the long, rank grass, nor stood until we stayed beside the burying ground of the Lorimers. Raising his finger, the sexton pointed to the newly-cut letters on the tombstone, which read thus : " Here lies the last of the Lorimers." " Does it please you ?" said the sexton. " So far as workmanship goes I have no fault to find, but it tells a lie. True it is, the house which Tom once inhabited lies rotting in its ruin down there, but Tom, the real Tom, still lives, still walks by my side—aye, and will continue to do so, till that gate which opens once for all men has opened unto me, when I shall again behold him face to face in that world that knows no grief and owns no graves."

JIMMY.

DIED HOGMANAY, THE LAST NIGHT OF 1902.

Let gladsome hearts dance in the day,
Bright hearts that know no sorrow,
Although the old year dies to-night
A new one lives to-morrow.
Fill high the glass, round let it pass
From one lip to another ;
But none for me, no, none for me,
For I have lost a brother.

Blow wintry winds your wildest wail,
I charge thee sound no other.
A milder strain would further pain
Since Death has slain my brother.
Fill high the glass, round let it pass,
From one lip to another ;
But none for me, no, none for me,
My grief it cannot smother.
So full of life, of love and hope,
Once darling of our mother ;
Had Death's cold dart not pierced his heart
I'd not have lost my brother.

No, no, not lost, just gone before,
You'll meet on yonder morrow,
Where all above is light and love,
Nor pain, nor death, nor sorrow.

Fill high the glass, round let it pass
From one lip to another ;
I cannot drink, I can but think
About my angel brother.

SUBMISSION.

All's over now, my baby boy,
All's over now,
No more shall cruel Death annoy
Or chill thy brow.

All's over now, my little child,
Sweet be thy sleep,
Thou'lt never know life's stormy wild
And treacherous deep.

All's over now, my little Will,
Thy race is run,
Thy little limbs can now be still,
Thy crown is won.

All's over now, my little pet,
Unless the grave ;
Though hard to bear, I will not fret—
'Twas God who gave.

All's over now, remove from sight.
I've but to wait :
We'll meet our boy, a cherub bright,
At Heaven's gate.

All's over now ; but clod to clod,
Green grass above,
The rest I'll safely leave with God,
Oh God of love !

GEORGE HAMILTON'S EPITAPH.*

Sleep, soundly sleep, my aul' frien' George,
 Beneath green grass and daisies ;
May every bird that haunts this yird
 Vie ither in their praises
O' him wha kept fu' snod and trig
 The bed o' ilka sleeper ;
Baith rich and puir got a' ae care
 When thou wast auld Death's keeper.

* For many years sexton in Galston.

LINES COMPOSED AT THE GRAVE OF
PROVOST MACKAY, KILMARNOCK.

Ah ! tell me not we've seen the last
Of dearly loved Mackay ;
Although the house in which he lived
Doth now in ruins lie,
He lives and moves within our hearts,
And live for long he will ;
Such men as he can smile at Death,
For such Death cannot kill.

EPITAPH ON THE KING OF CURLERS.

When hairst was by and stackyards fu'
O' well-got gowden grain,
And frost drew farmers to the loch
To birl the channel stane,
What chiel among the curlers keen,
That ever skipp'd or led,
Could curl a stane, wi' him noo gane,
Warm-hearted Bob Lochhead.

AT THE GRAVE OF JAMIE GIBSON,
COWGROVE.

Is this the spot of earth that holds all that is mortal of my departed friend ? This is the spot. Behold the emblems of respect and grief which wounded hearts and loving hands have strewn upon the covering of the bed where rests the corselet of a peasant brave. 'Tis meet that the first and fairest of Spring flowers should thus adorn his couch. Cold sweeps the blast of March adown the vale ; the leafless trees bend low at every chilling breath ; the songsters of the grove have for a season laid aside their pipes and sought for shelter till the storm is spent ; I, too, must go, yet, even 'mid the howling of the storm I'll sing—

Good bye, my dear departed friend,
Good bye, but not for ever ;
He lies who says the grave's the end,
You've only crossed that river
Where life again begins anew,
A life that knows no sorrow ;
Where you'll meet me, and I'll meet you,
On that bright, nightless morrow.

**" THE PEACE OF GOD PASSETH ALL
UNDERSTANDING."**

**MOONLIGHT ON MILLPORT BAY, MIDNIGHT,
15TH SEPTEMBER, 1900.**

The white-winged skiffs at anchor ride,
No sound from gull or steamer
Disturbs the murmur of the tide,
Or muse of poet dreamer ;
Oh blessed peace ! oh holy calm !
Oh soul, who long has striven
To find out God, come join the psalm,
For this, yes, this is Heaven !

The moon is dancing o'er the bay,
The wavelets time are keeping,
The stars that mark the Milky Way
Keep constantly repeating—
Oh blessed peace ! oh holy calm !
Oh soul, who long has striven
To find out God, come join the psalm,
For this, yes, this is Heaven !

Behold the shining crystal floor,
Behold the jewell'd ceiling,
Hark ! all around the silver shore
What golden bells are pealing—
Oh blessed peace ! oh holy calm !
Oh soul, who long has striven
To find out God, come join the psalm,
For this, indeed, is Heaven !

STORM AND DARKNESS, SUNDAY NIGHT,
23RD SEPTEMBER.

Where now the stars, and where the moon
That made the midnight fair as noon
When last I strolled along your shore ?
And where the skiffs that idly lay
Upon the bosom of the bay,
So like a glistening crystal floor ?
And where the bells that music made
As all along the strand they played
To me their sweet soul-soothing psalm ?
All, all is changed ; an inky pall
From shore to shore envelopes all,
Save God, who rules o'er storm and calm.

CURLERS' SONG.

Wi' frien's long, long gane o'er the sea,
In search of wealth and fame,
I've gathered roun' the glassy tee,
And played the roaring game.
And ither frien's long, long since deid,
Hae joined me in my glee,
As heigh I raised my besom heid,
And cried, "Cock-ee! Cock-ee!"
Then here's tae ane, and here's tae a',
Keen curlers, past and present,
Turn in, turn out, long guard, or draw,
But never turn unpleasant.

I've played for meal to bodies puir,
I've whiles played for a dinner,
And whiles I hae been lickit sair,
And whiles I've been the winner.
But up or down, I ne'er look sour,
At Jamie, Jock, or Will,
The skip that plays upon the dour
Has unco little skill.
Then here's tae ane, and here's tae a',
Keen curlers, past and present,
Turn in, turn out, long guard, or draw,
But never turn unpleasant.

For life, my lads, is just a game,
Be sure and play your best,
What though you should at nicht gang hame
Some points below the rest.
For ye maun min' that soon or late,
That ane an' a' will dee,
And then it is we'll see wha's beat,
As we draw roun' yon tee.
Then here's tae ane, and here's tae a',
Keen curlers, past and present,
Turn in, turn out, long guard, or draw,
But never turn unpleasant.

THE SONG OF THE ANGLER.

The morning is cloudy, the wind from the west,
Is kissing the wild flowers and ruffling the breast
Of the dark, shady pools, where the speckled trout
 lies,
So eagerly watching and waiting for flies.

Chorus.

Then give me my rod, my line, and my reel,
A fly from the storm-cock, a fly from the teal,
The licht o' a hare-lug, and hackle of black,
My piece in my pouch and my creel on my back.

Let the huntsman halloo as he bounds o'er the
 hill,
Tracking the foxhounds, all eager to kill.
Let the game-killing sportsman delight in his gun,
And boast of his bag when the day's work is done.

Chorus.

But give me my line, my rod, and my reel, &c.

I envy them not their sport on the hill ;
So long's I've a rod, and a fly that will kill,
The dog-fox may bark and the moorcock may
 scream,
While happy I fish o'er some clear winding stream.

Chorus.

Then give me my rod, my line, and my reel,
A fly from the storm-cock, a fly from the teal.
The licht o' a hare-lug, and hackle o' black,
When evening comes roun' I'll be hame wi' a tak'.

REPLY TO AN APPRECIATIVE CRITIC.

Oh would you were a Duke or Earl,
Wha sees in me—a nameless carle—
The power to touch, like thrush or merle,
 Baith heart and ear ;
Wha kens, ye nicht by pen or word
Cause e'en the King to pay regard
By sending to your modest Bard
 A'e word o' cheer.

Like maist o' Bards, though short o' chink,
I wadna like the King to think
My feet are that near puirtith's brink
 I daurna mudge ;
Na, na, my frien', had I a say,
I'd bid him come Kilmarnock way,
His meat and drink I'd help to pay
 Without a grudge.

Noo that his dear aul' mither's gone
And he has got her crown and throne,
He needna blush to make it known,
 Baith near and far,
That he has read your meed o' praise,
And that he means, ere mony days,
To come and fix his royal gaze
 On Ga'ston's star.

O man ! O man ! I wish he would,
'Twould do your frien' a world o' guid ;
The wee bit spark that's long been hid
 Would turn a flame ;
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
From lowly cot and lordly hall,
Would gladly rush at Edward's call
 And sound my fame.

ON THE HORRORS OF WAR.

Let other Bards their harp-strings strike
In praise of war's alarms,
For me, I own that I dislike
The call "To arms ! To arms !"

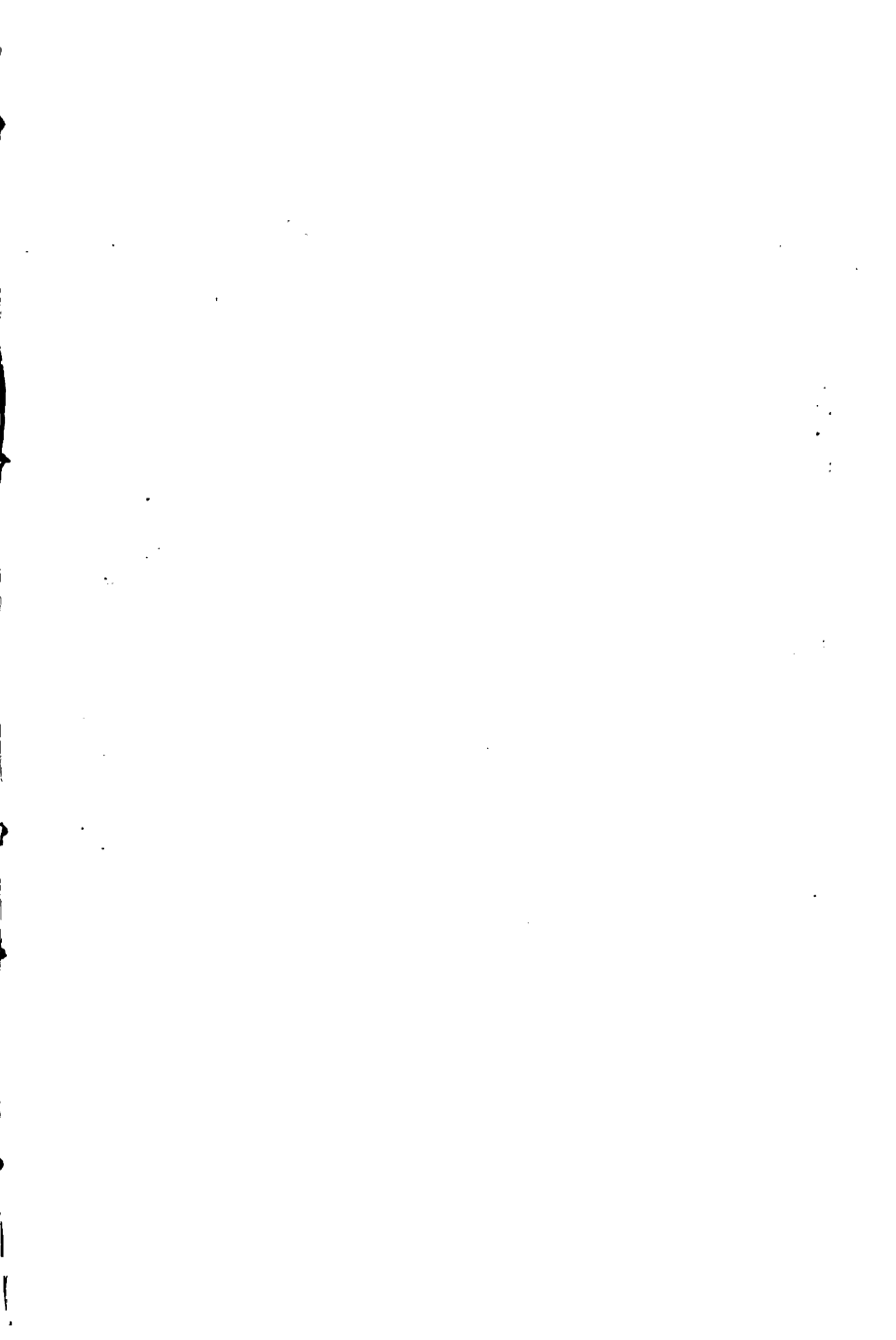
I see no glory in the strife
That lays a brother low,
Leaving to mother, child, or wife,
A legacy of woe.

I hear no glory in the cries
That greet returning braves,
For well I know the orphan eyes
Bedew with tears the graves

Of those who ne'er will come again
To home or kindred dear ;
For they have found on Afric's plains
A soldier's crimson bier.

Go, go at once, ye sons of God,
And sheath the sword for aye ;
If ever more you stain the sod,
I charge you, Cease to pray.

The Saviour cried, "Put up the sword,"
When Peter struck the blow,
"My weapons are kind deeds and words,
By these my friends I know."



Adam Miller.

Robert Young.

Wm. Lee.



THREE TRUMPS.

Two rags support the King of Hearts,
Two rags of high degree—
The one's a rag of holy parts,
The other's Baker Lee.

SANCTUM RHYMES.

Some special friends of the late Bailie Gemmell got into the habit of paying him a short visit on Saturday night, just before the closing hour of ten—spending a few minutes with him in his back shop, which latterly got to be known as “The Sanctum.” The fun generally commenced with the formal presentation of some sweets to the Bailie, both speech and reply being in doggerel rhyme, which were greeted with much applause and hearty laughter till the ringing of the ten-hour bell broke up the meeting. The following rhymes were amongst those recited on these occasions.

THE BACKSHOP FIRE-EN'.

Sweet are the draps* we weekly sook
Aroun' the Bailie's fire,
But sweeter far tae note each face
As Gemmell sweeps the Lyre,
Now soft and low, now rich and grand,
Now rolling loud like thunder ;
The marvel is to those who hear,
He never makes a blunder.

Nae bar-room Muse, I trow, is his
That sings just o'er a drammie ;
If it were so, we ne'er had heard
The wail o' Annie Lammie,

*A packet of sweets provided by one of the company.

Nor how the factor, kindly chiel,
Doled out his rabbits frisky,
Nor how the baker drank his health
In guid Auld Highlan' whisky.

All this, and more, we had not known
Unless we had our poet
To set us all in comic song,
Then to his cronies show it.
Long may his Muse on pinions strong
Soar high above his fellows,
So that he may from week to week
Have something good to tell us.

Come Young, come Miller, Blair, and Lee,
Wha meet within his Sanctum
And wish how long that he may crawl
As crouse as ony bantam ;
For when his clarion call is hushed,
I doot we'll sairly miss him ;
So join the baker in this prayer—
“ Guid Lord Almichty, Bless him.”

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

DEAR ———,

It grieved me sair to hear yestreen
That you're in bed and ailing ;
I hope and trust it disna mean
That heart or flesh is failing.

I've also heard that Elder John
Has used his best endeavour,
But not a sign as yet is shown
That he's in special favour.

Aul' Tammas too's been at the Throne ;
But as for him, I'm thinking,
His prayer at best is but a drone
That sets the Angels winking.

I've wrestled too, and wrestling still,
Sincere as ony Quaker.
I ken I'm bad, but no that ill,
The Lord will hear the Baker.

I'm no like some, I gie nae fash
Unless for things that's pressing ;
And fine He kens what's gowd, what's trash,
And what deserves a blessing.

I feel I canna flee sae high,
Now that my wings are broken ;
But I can heave that heartfelt sigh
That beats a' prayers that's spoken.

In mercy, Lord, remember Young,
Nor scrimp him wi' a blessing ;
'Twill please Thee well to hear his tongue
Thy love for him confessing.

LINES TO MY FRIEND KEITH.

DEAR KEITH,

Don't fash your head, though growing auld,
Nor let your heart get worried
'Bout what will happen after that
Your well-worn banes are buried.

Pleased, pleased was I, my worthy frien',
To get your New Year letter,
Sae fu' o' love to me and mine—
You couldna sent ocht better.

I've wealth o' meat, I've wealth o' claes,
I've horses, lan', and houses ;
Some gowden guineas here and there,
Laid out for ithers' uses.

I've frien's, true frien's, on ilka han'—
What mair could I desire ?
And when my hinmost years run out
I've faith that I'll gang higher.

Nor Kirk, nor State, shall stay my flicht,
Or downwards hurl the Baker ;
On pinions strong I'll cleave the way
That leads me to my Maker.

It's no' in Kirks or narrow Creeds
That we will find salvation,
Nor is it by opposing these
That we will get damnation.

Keep near to Him who spent His life
In working out redemption ;
Whoe'er does this will find that he
From Hell has gained exemption.

Oh Keith, oh Keith, be't yours and mine,
When dust our dust has covered,
To praise the Lord that we in time
This blessed truth discovered.

TO R. YOUNG, ON RECEIVING A POCKET
DIARY.

I got your book, and for your trouble,
To save a friend frae future hubble,
Accept of thanks in measure double
Frae Elder Lee.

Wi' blushing face I must admit,
To herd the plate I'm scarcely fit,
Nor in the Session should I sit
Of the U.P.

Could they but bare my scalp and read
What thochts at times run through my heid,
Or hear each word, and mark ilk deed,
They'd get a fricht.

But here I am, and I maun wait,
I'll try and no forget the plate ;
Within the book I'll mark each date,
'Twill keep me richt.

How prood am I to think that He
Wha shed the licht on land and sea
Shall be the Judge o' Elder Lee
In that Great Day.

Oh, what a gathering that will be !
I wonder whiles if you'll ken me,
And if in spirit land we three
Will euchre play. *

God only knows, and He is just ;
'Twas He who called us from the dust ;
Therefore in Him I'll put my trust—
He loves all men.

What pleasure, think you, could He have
In sending you or me to slave
For endless years in some grim cave
In Hell's dark glen ?

I'll no believe, I'll no believe,
That through yon thochtless lassie Eve,
Ae helpless soul will ever grieve,
A lone outcast.

The Power that paints the flowers sae brow
And marks ilk wee bit sparrow's fa',
Wi' Heaven-spun cords o' love will draw
A' hame at last.

* In the Sanctum the members sometimes indulged in the
game of euchre.

THE KING'S VISIT TO GLASGOW, 1903.

TO J. G. STEWART.

I've looked, and looked, and looked again,
But a' my looking seems in vain ;
I dinna see 'mong a' the crood,
That good King Ned's been making prood,
Ae soul I ken.

O would that I had been his guide,
I'd ta'en him doon by auld Clyde side,
And shown him, high above the street,
A man it's aye a charm to meet,
A king o' men.

And had our frien', J. G., been out,
I'd just have turned the King about
And said, " We'll noo try Dixon Street,
For there I ken we'll get a treat
Will sharp our teeth."

Oh man, oh man, I think I see
The merry twinkle o' an e'e
As in I stepped and this did say,
" I've brought with me the King to-day,
To knight you, Keith."

"Come ben, come ben, my good King Ned,
You're welcome baith to sup and bed ;
I must confess I'd felt it sair
If you had knighted ony mair
And passed by me.

"My claims are great, you must admit ;
Ask wha you like, they'll say I'm fit
To pay my share—and drink it too,
Nor lift till every cronie's fou,
E'en Baker Lee."

To this His Majesty replied
"No need of speech from one so tried ;
In gilded bar or gay saloon,
Inside or out of Glasgow toon
You bear the gree.

Kneel down, kneel down, nor be afraid."
The King drew forth his gleaming blade,
And waved it o'er his auld bald head,
And said, "Rise up, a knight indeed,
Of high degree."

THE BAILIE AND THE SPIDERS.

Oh waes me for the spiders,
The blanket rack's ta'en doon ;
Like horses wanting riders
They're rinnin' roun' and roun'.

They're coursing o'er the ceiling,
They're coursing o'er the floor,
And some are sitting squealing
Abune the Sanctum door.

The Bailie's crying, " Vermin,
I'll mak' ye shift your looms ;
Too long your tribe's been swarmin'
Within my business rooms."

At this an aul' grey chappie
Cocked out his head and said,
" For long we've here been happy
Thrang working at our trade.

" Our forbears started spinning
Within this very room,
I'm tauld that their beginning
Was ae wee corner loom.

" By dint o' perseverance
We've looms in every hole,
To think you'll talk o' clearance
Is mair than we can thole.

" I spoke to you this morning
As you cam' in the door,
Without a moment's warning
You swept me to the floor.

" It ill becomes a Bailie
To hurt a neebour's gear,
You've done as much as jail ye
If it were proven clear."

The Bailie mused in silence
Beside the blanket rack,
Then said, " Forgive my violence,
You'll get another tack.

" Don't look for me repairing
Your heddles or your treads ;
Be thankfu' that I'm sparing
Your best and newest steads.

" Ca' a' your tribe together,
And tell them we've agreed.
And while you talk through ither
I'll just soop up the deid."

TO TOM SMITH.

I've read the note you sent our chief,
The leader of our corps ;
Thank God wi' me, he's no a thief
Like many chiefs of yore.

He disna wear the tartan plaid,
He disna use the dirk,
He never led a reivin' raid
Nor stole a neighbour's stirk.

But oh, he wears what's far mair worth,
A heart that's warm and true ;
God stamped him gentleman at birth,
He's ne'er had cause tae rue.

The grocer, kindly-hearted chiel
(God bless his honest face),
Was built by God to fecht the Deil
In kirk and market place.

I've yet to meet, on flood or field,
A knight more true and brave ;
His battle cry is, " Who shall yield
While there's a soul to save."

But as for me, puir feckless thing.
I'm scarcely worth a thocht,
Although I wear the "Crackit ring,"*
My company's seldom socht

Unless by those who like yoursel'
Have got that magic power
Which helps betimes such tales to tell
As make the critics glower.

I hope our latest young recruit
Will ne'er hae cause to rue
That e'er he tried to sound the lute
Or joined the crackit crew.

Long may he live, long may he sing,
Nor heed what critics say ;
If they could buy the magic ring
They'd buy't this very day.

* Membership of the "Crackit Circle," a Society whose members were supposed to have a crack in their cranium.

THE SONG OF THE SHUTTER.

The opening bud and lengthening day,
The sparrow's merry twitter,
May cheer the heart of maidens gay
And set them in a flutter ;

But as for me, these only say
As plain as tongue could utter,
A few short weeks brings Whitsunday,
Then I must close the shutter.

Could I but sprag Time's speedy wheel,
Or coup it in the gutter,
I might be spared the pain I feel
At closing up that shutter.

But on it drives, I canna stay't,
No matter what I mutter.
Stern Fate commands, I must obey't ;
So let us close the shutter.

Adieu ! adieu ! dear hallowed den,
Nor fear while I can stutter,
That I'll forget you or the men
Who met behind the shutter.

Dear, dear as life, thy grimy walls
Shall ever be to me ;
Even when I tread Jerusalem's halls
I'll have sweet thoughts o' thee.

One farewell look within the press
That stands ayont the fire ;
Bring out the bottle and the glass
That often did inspire.

Now, Father John, thou King o' Men,
I bid thee run the cutter ;
It wants a wee while yet o' ten,
But I will close the shutter.

THE LAST NIGHT IN THE SANCTUM.

The ever-moving wheel of Time
Has brought me face to face
With that dread hour which bids me say
We now must leave this place.

But thus it is, the whole world o'er,
With all we hold most dear.
Fate gives the word, we must obey—
We trust, we doubt, we fear.

Could you but draw aside the veil
That hides my heart from view,
You would not blame me when I say
'Tis hard to bid adieu.

But say't I must ; the hour has come
'Twill soon be ringing ten ;
One toast I ask before we go,
" The Bailie's hallowed den."

Tread softly as you leave this cell,
One last look at the door,
For the place which knew the Bailie well
Shall know him never more.

A KILMARNOCK CHRISTMAS IDYLL.

When I count the years that have passed over my head since last I stood on this particular spot of my dear old native town, Kilmarnock, I must admit that I have grown somewhat old. Is it a dream? No dream, but such a reality as makes me pause and ponder. Look, you see that building on the eastern side of the main street? That is the old Town's House. See how its zinc-covered spire glistens in the clear, cold moonlight. On the west there still stands that long row of one-storey warehouses. How my heart beats for very joy when I think that amid all the changes which the withering breath of time has brought about, this part of old Kilmarnock remains the same as when I was a boy, save the names above the doors. And well I know that underneath the great arch upon which all these are resting the dark water of the river Marnock, unless it be churned to fury by a moorland flood, still trails itself, snake-like, to the sea. Ah! do you hear that sound? Yes. That is the old clock which hangs up in that old historic steeple on the other side of the water, tolling out the hour of eight. I wonder if a little further down, on that side of the stream, the big house where the wealthy hid their gold still stands, and if behind

it the giant beeches still kiss the sky and their great arms give shelter to a colony of crows. I'll see to-morrow.

What a strange coincidence ! That same clock, long, long years ago, gave tongue to the same hour when Bob Brown and I entered that shop there, then owned by Betty Lintie, to buy a pair of boots. What seeming trifles will turn the current of a life ! But for those boots, or rather what happened on the way to buy them, Bob would have been a clergyman rather than a doctor of medicine, as he turned out to be. Let me tell you the story. It is not long, but there is a degree of pathos in it. Bob and I were at school together. At the time of which I am now thinking our combined ages would not have measured a score. Bob's mind had been cast in a very serious, sensitive mould, and his great ambition was, when a man, to be a minister. With such a lofty idea ever before him, no wonder he was a regular attender at church. Looking forward to the coming winter, he remembered that his boots were not only past mending but that his feet had outgrown them. Scanning the boot shop windows for a pair that would suit him, he found that which took his fancy, and stepping in he asked Betty if she thought that the pair of star-headed tacketted boots in the window would fit him. She told him to come behind the counter, and applying the measure stick to his bare foot she replied that they were

just as if they had been made for him. Having learned the price he bargained with her to keep them until he had saved the necessary sum.

II.

It was Christmas Eve when Bob stepped into my mother's kitchen and asked if I would go up the street with him to lift his boots. "Go up the street with you," said I; "I'd swim the Marnock, Bob, though it were in its wildest mood, or fight the biggest boy in school if needed for your sake. But before we go, show me how to do this sum." 'Twas the work of a minute, for Bob was clever. Laying the slate aside, I seized my cap and off we set. Up Titchfield Street we trotted, with hearts as light as the downie snowflakes that were silently but surely covering housetops and streets. What did Bob care for the snow, though barefooted? Had he not in one pocket a pair of warm woollen socks and in another the money which in a few minutes would make him the proud owner of those wonderful boots? Neither of us, however, had thought that something would happen that would cause Bob to bring them home under his arm instead of laced on his feet. But just within a few yards of Betty's shop the iron-clad toe of a labourer's boot accidentally struck him on the heel and cut it like a knife. A little yelp, a little limp, a few tears, and we were in the shop. Down went the money, and out of the window Betty

brought the boots. "Come ben to the back shop," said she, "and get your feet washed, and then we'll get them tried on, for it's an unco nicht to be barefooted." But boys were hardy in those days, and God knows they had need to be so, for the times were hard compared with now.

Although it is many years now since Betty made her exit from that shop and from this world, I still clearly see her face and distinctly hear her voice, as she exclaimed, when she saw the blood dropping from Bob's foot. "In the name o' Guidness, what did that? You canna try on boots wi' a foot in that state." I told her how it happened, and Bob, holding up the other foot, replied, "That ane's no bluidin', Betty; I can try on ane." Betty knelt down and gently washed, then dried his feet, and tenderly bound up his wounded heel. The one boot was tried on and pronounced a proper fit. The pair were tied up in paper, and with a sixpence back from Betty we made tracks through the still falling snow for home. When we got there the accident was explained, the boots examined and admired. Bob went to bed drawing what consolation he could from the thought that it would not be long till his foot was better, and then he would get to church.

Day followed day, even that which we call a year had not only rolled itself up into the unreturning past but the new one which had taken its place was past its childhood, and still Bob's foot was

sore. To a boy of my nature it mattered little whether I went to church or stayed at home, but to a boy like Bob, who meant to be a minister, it was quite a different thing. Thus he reasoned it : " If I can go with my bare feet to school, what's to hinder me from going to church ? I will go next Sunday." When Sunday came, long before the Kilmarnock bells began to ring, Bob was dressed fu' snod and clean. His mother gave the finishing touch to his toilet by applying some green coloured ointment to his heel, and binding it up with a clean white rag, she next gave him a penny and a Bible, and told him he'd best " gie awa " before the streets got too busy. All kirks were alike to Bob in those days. Therefore when he reached the street, he thought he would go to one that was not far away, in the outskirts of the town. Crossing the street he entered a road that led him to the sacred edifice. Save for the few houses that were built at the northern end of it you would have called it a country lane. At the south end of the lane or street, on a grassy knoll, stood the church. Between the houses and the church on the left hand side was a green field skirted by a thorn hedge, on the right a high stone wall which protected the gardens that lay behind.

As soon as Bob felt himself beyond the houses, he also felt that his every fibre was tuned to highest pitch of praise ; he thought he'd never seen the sky so blue or the sun so warm and

bright. Nor was he alone in his admiration of that lovely morn. The flesher's grey cob neighed with delight at finding itself free to nibble at the fresh May grass. From out the leafy hedgerow a host of feathery throats trilled out their gladsome lays, and over the garden wall the fruit trees stretched their flower-decked arms, and waved them in the balmy breeze. High overhead, a mere speck in space, like a spider hanging from the boundless roof of earth, the lark on quivering wing swelled forth the praises of Him who had made a world so fair. For the first time in his life Bob Brown knew the meaning of trees clapping their hands, and the heart of all Nature rejoicing.

In this worshipful frame of mind Bob entered the porch of the church. Quietly he dropped his penny in the plate, reverently he doffed his cap, and silently he slipped into church. He took the first empty seat he came to. Scarcely had he settled himself in the soft cushion when a rustling sound, causing him to think of angels' wings, caught his ear. On looking round he beheld, instead of an angel, a richly-dressed, silken-gowned woman beckoning him to come out. Bob, seeing there was plenty of room, paid no attention beyond shifting himself a little farther up. But not to be denied, the haughty dame, in a tone of voice that meant obedience, ordered him to come out. The iron had pierced his young heart. Forgetting for the moment his sore feet, he sprang like a wounded

hare, and bounded out of church. One of the men who stood by the plate caught him by the arm and kindly asked him what was wrong. Through choking sobs Bob told him all. "Come in with me," said the elder, "and I will give you a seat." But though he had offered the boy all the money that lay in the plate it would not have induced him to return. He lifted the lad in his strong arms and kindly carried him over the rough gravel walk, and gently set him down outside the gate. "Dinna tak' it sae sair to heart," said the good man; "Fanny Vintner's born, but she's no buried yet. She's come o' the kin' that can build buildings and ca' them kirks, but she has yet to learn that it tak's the Spirit o' the Maister to mak' them the House of God." Homewards up the road Bob limped. The lane, which but a few minutes before he thought a Paradise, so full of light and love it seemed, was now, alas! alas! a very charnel house, in which lay cold and dead the ashes of his burned-out ambition.

III.

It was Christmas once again, but between the Christmas I now speak of and the Christmas Eve on which Bob and I entered Betty Lintie's shop to lift that fateful pair of boots, from off the ever circling reel of Time, there had been run out twenty-five years of the brittle line of life. 'Twas in his own house, situated in the centre of an

industrial city of England, the place he had chosen as the field whereon he might spend his life and labour amongst the sick and afflicted as a doctor, that I last met my playmate and friend, Robert Brown. Natural it was that our thoughts and our speech should be reminiscent. Old places, old faces, and recollections, grave and gay, in panoramic fashion, passed before our mental gaze, but none seemed to have burned so deep into the doctor's soul as his ejection from that church. Nor did I marvel at it when he told me that under his charge in the city's hospital she had spent her last weeks on earth, and that his own hand had gently closed in death the eyes of Fanny Vintner. From her own lips he learned her name, her birthplace, and her sad, sad later life story. "But," said the doctor, with a voice full of emotion, "though there was a time when I would have struck a blow at her very shadow if I had seen it on the wall, there was now no room in all my heart for aught but tenderest pity." Oh, the nobility of the man. He never made the woman aware of the fact that he knew her or that she had once caused him pain. "It was Sunday morning," said the doctor, "when the end came. All through the night I had heard the flutter of the dark-winged messenger, and knew that dissolution was at hand. At a quarter to eleven, standing by her bedside with my finger on her fast-failing pulse, my thoughts went back to old Kilmarnock. Again I heard the music of

the church bells, again I saw the streets thronged with worshippers, and as the hand pointed the hour, the soul of Fanny Vintner left its house of clay and winged its way into the presence of Him before whom all must stand with empty hands and bare feet."

LINES ON THE BIRTH OF ONE OF OUR
MINOR POETS.

When first his infant voice was heard
'Twas on an Easter morn ;
The midwife cried, " Believe my word
This child's a Poet born."
The mother heard, but nothing said ;
Hers was the pain to bear,
But when old Nature's debt was paid,
She kissed her jewel rare.

O'er hill and dale sweet Morning smiled ;
The bells from tower and spire
Rung out the advent of a child
That yet would touch the lyre ;
A mavis, perched upon a tree,
Told out the news in song ;
A thousand throats caught up the key
And rolled it right along.

The whispering winds, the dancing rills,
Joined in the sweet refrain ;
The woodlands and the hoary hills
Proclaimed it o'er again.
Though now that child's grown old and grey,
While seated at his hearth
I've heard his little children say,
" Thank God for daddy's birth."

LINES WRITTEN IN A YOUNG LADY'S
ALBUM.

A bud you were of promise rare
When first you climbed my knee,
And oft when gazing in your eyes
I've wondered what you'd be.
I've seen the bud become a flower
That sheds its fragrance round ;
Let no rude hand a petal stain,
Nor my sweet floweret wound.

TO A FRIEND ON HIS GOLDEN WEDDING.

It's gi'en to few—aye, very few—
To tramp life's road as long as you ;
And fewer still there be can say
" 'Tis fifty years ago, to-day,
Since, full of love and manly pride,
I homeward bore my bonny bride,
And crowned her wife."

Through all these years that crown she's worn,
Untarnished still it doth adorn
Her honoured head. Oh may you still
Go hand in hand adown life's hill ;
May nothing chill your life of love,
Nought blight your trust in God above,
And endless life.

TO A BLACKBIRD.

Pipe on, sweet bird, from golden bill
Pour forth these notes divine ;
The costliest pipe of human skill
Is tame compared with thine.

Pipe on, sweet bird, your song recalls
A voice no longer here ;
Yet, soft and low, its tone now falls
Upon fond Mem'ry's ear.

Pipe on, sweet bird, I see the place
Where, sitting side by side,
I gazed upon that lovely face
And whispered, " Be my bride."

Pipe on, sweet bird, I'll come again
'Twixt sunset and the even,
That I may hear your mellow strain
That lifts my soul to Heaven.

Pipe on, sweet bird, soft winds will bear
Your song across the hill,
That other ears than mine may hear
And other bosoms thrill.

Pipe on, sweet bird, though I am sad
I would not have thee so,
I know that we shall yet be glad
In Heaven—if not below.

LINES TO A DEAD MAVIS FOUND IN
LOUDOUN WOODS.

Cauld, heartless wretch—for such thou art
That whizzing sent this fatal dart,
Wi' lightning speed right through the heart
 O' this wee singer ;
'Twad been thy price if trigger smart
 Had brak thy finger.

Nae mair, sweet bird, at close o' day,
The cottar, trudging o'er the way,
Shall rest to hear thy hinmost lay
 Float thro' the glade ;
Nor mair thou'lt greet the break o' day,
 For low thou'rt laid.

And never mair thy thrilling sang
Shall echo Loudoun's woods amang,
Nae mair adown yon burnie gang
 Tae meet thy mate ;
And she, puir thing, tho' thinking lang,
 Kens nae thy fate.

But maybe some ane o' thy feather,
That oft has seen thee sport thegither,
Kennin' fu' weel you lo'ed each ither,
 The news will carry ;
Oh may he break it like a brither
 And wi' her tarry,

Till ance thy young ha'e ta'en the wing,
And Nature learned them how to sing
As sweet as e'er thou did'st in Spring
Or Summer day,
And mak' the leafy plantin ring
Wi' gladsome lay.

NANCY.

SONG WRITTEN IN A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM.

Meet me, Nancy, bonnie Nancy,
When the dew begins tae fa' ;
Thou'rt my first, my only fancy,
Artless, winning, young and braw.

Meet me by the crystal fountain ;
Need I name the trysting hour
When the sun's behind yon mountain
And the nicht begins tae lower ?

Down the woody, winding grove,
Where the mellow mavis sings,
Where the west winds love to rove
And the primrose sweetly springs.

Meet me, love ; and then we'll wander
Till we hear the village bell,
'Mid the folds of Loudoun's grandeur,
Tales of love to thee I'll tell.

Meet me, Nancy, bonnie Nancy,
When the dew begins tae fa' ;
Thou'rt my first, my only fancy,
Nane but thee my ain I'll ca'.

LEDDY JEAN.

'Tis sweet to see the harvest moon
And star-bespangled sky,
And sweet to hear the Irvine croon
Its peaceful lullaby ;
But sweeter far than nicht or noon
Is she wha reigns as queen
Within the halls of Ladyton,
The Laird's ain winsome Jean.
Dear to the Laird her every charm,
And will be aye, I ween ;
May Heaven shield frae ocht would harm
The Laird or Leddy Jean.

To see her ance is to adore,
So artless is her mien ;
Long may the Laird keep love in store
To warm the heart o' Jean.
No sailor e'er had star for guide
That could wi' her compare ;
By nicht or noon, or eventide,
She's ever bright and fair.
Dear to the laird her every charm,
And will be aye, I ween ;
May Heaven shield frae ocht would harm
The Laird or Leddy Jean.

SPRING MUSINGS.

Auld Ga'ston Moor's ta'en aff her sark,
And cast it in Burnawn ;
The farmer lads are a' at wark,
Thrang turning o'er the lan'.

I've lockit by my " Tink'rin hills,"*
My handles and my brush ;
I've heard the day twa piping bills,
A blackbird and a thrush.

The green wheat braird an inch or twa
Just through the clod is showin',
And close beside the Castle wa'
The snawdraps white are blowin'.

Yon gilded cock aboon the Kirk
That fears nae weet or drouth,
Has gi'en his tail a Norland jerk,
And faced the sunny South.

Then come wi' me, true wisdom glean
While through the woods we stroll,
A world of beauty lies between
Burnhouse and Pebble-hole.

* Curling stanes.

Dear haunt of luckless Johnnie Wright,
I love thee for his sake ;
Could my poor Muse essay the flight,
Your praises I would wake.

But not for me, it is not mine
Your praise in song to tell,
But I may worship at the shrine
While musing in the dell.

Then I will deem it worth my while
To leave the busy mart,
If I can catch our Father's smile
And feel it warm my heart.

AUTUMN MUSINGS.

'Twas in the green of hopeful Spring
When last I roved this sylvan grove,
And heard the speckled mavis sing
'Mong bursting buds his song of love.
And there was one that shared my joy,
And pressed my hand as lovers press ;
Again my heart throbb'd as a boy,
And fond I did her form caress.

Again I wander through the grove,
O'er withered leaves 'neath naked trees,
But no bird rolls his song of love
Out on the cold November breeze :
No hand clasps mine, no lovelit face
Walks by my side, to cheer me on ;
This world for her has now no place,
And I must tread the grove alone.

But though the trees within the grove
Have thrown aside their leafy screen,
The Spring again with breath of love
Will clothe anew in garb of green :
But as for me, no future Spring
Will ever bring love's golden sheen ;
Life's music's o'er, death snapt the string,
And now I think what might have been.

OCTOBER MUSINGS.

There's a tremor 'mong the poplars
That fringe my garden wall,
And within my heart a sadness
As down the dead leaves fall.

There's a murmur in the streamlet
I rather would not hear,
For it tells me, plainly tells me,
That Summer's reached the sere.

The sky above is leaden-hued,
A mist obscures the hill,
There's not a bird in all the grove
That cheers me with its trill.

Look where I will, I see decay,
Strown over wood and field,
And a voice within me whispers :
All things to death must yield.

And when I yield, as yield I must,
Oh ! spare affection's tears,
For I will live a new-born life
Throughout eternal years.

Nor would I change the sombre scene
Although the power were mine ;
Through withered leaves and leaden sky
I trace the hand Divine.

INAUGURATION ODE.

TO COMMEMORATE THE UNVEILING OF KILMARNOCK
BURNS MONUMENT AND STATUE.

Ring out, sweet bells, ring loud and long ;
Come, songsters come, swell forth the song ;
Let hill and dale the notes prolong
In joyful turns.

Unveil ! Unveil ! no longer hide
Our Poet King, our country's pride ;
Ah, where's the name can rank beside
The name of Burns ?

'Tis he who paints in colours sweet
The gems that sparkle round our feet,
The joy that's felt when lovers meet
In life's bright morn.

The mother's hope, the mother's fear,
The father's care o'er daughters dear,
The farewell kiss and trembling tear
He does not scorn.

But these, and all that move the heart,
Are themes whereon his heaven-born art
Exalts itself, and plays the part
Of Truth's own teaching.

No sweeping round yon starlit dome,
No searching worlds where spirits roam ;
Enough he finds in cottar's home
For moral preaching.

There sits the spell that writes his name
Immortal in the scroll of fame,
And well Kilmarnock owns his claim
In stately pile.

But look, look on the work you've reared,
And ask me not if ere appeared
A Poet's name that's more revered
In our loved isle.

These stones proclaim, with one accord
He is the Bard, he is the Bard
Who claims the firm and sure regard
We pay him now.

Time's withering breath may crumble low
This mark of favour we bestow,
But green the wreath shall ever grow
Which binds his brow.

The King must leave, when Death appears,
The star bespangled crown he wears ;
The toilworn poor live out their years,
Then all is o'er.

Not so with him around whose head
Are twined green leaves and berries red,
For she who crowned him sweetly said,
" Thine evermore."

LINES TO A FRIEND WHILE FISHING IN
RIVER ANNAN, 1890.

Tell me brother of the reel,
Is it woodcock ? Is it teal ?
Is it minnow, scur, or hackle,
Or the famous " Stewart Tackle ?"
Is it hare-lug, dark or light,
Or the " silver hook " most bright ?
Which of these—Pray do not laugh—
Caused you first to use your " gaff ?"
Is it salmon, trout, or eel
That is packed within your creel ?
Tell me, Is't the same old story,
Best of sport, " Ould Ireland's glory."
Is the Annan big or wee ?
Yours sincerely, William Lee.

A FRAGMENT.

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING A DRINKING CUP PLACED
AT CESSNOCK SPOUT, FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF
PASSERS.

I've drunk from cups of golden glare,
Claret, port, or sherry ;
Of whisky too I've had my share,
And 'neath its spell been merry.
But ne'er a cup, however bright,
Nor yet a drink, however stout,
Could match the drink I drank last night
From out the cup at Cessnock Spout.

Could I but meet the generous youth
Whose goodness placed it there,
He ne'er should feel the pangs of drouth
While I've a groat to spare.
But should this pleasure be denied
While wandering here below,
May he and I meet side by side,
Where purer streams than Cessnock flow.

AN IDYLL.

LEEANUS THE ARTIST.

Oh, Memory, what power is thine to please or pain ! Surely, oh surely, when all that is mortal has been returned to Mother Earth we will find thee amongst the things that know no death. If it be not so, those well known words, "Son, Remember," could have had no power to sting the soul of the once wealthy Dives ; neither could I, but for thee, oh dreadful power, tell now of how and where I met Leeanus.

I had reached the end of my first engagement with the well known firm of Fowler & Forrest, and before entering on a second term I was made the recipient of a month's holiday and a handsome sum of money. Possessed of these I lost no time in bringing about the realisation of a dream of many years' standing, namely, a trip to the Continent. Ere I had turned my back upon the white cliffs of Albion, and set my face towards one of the gayest and grandest of Continental cities, I had vowed that that instrument which the world and the flesh call Pleasure would by me be sounded from top to bottom ; nor did I break my vow. Through gilded cafés and gay saloons I strolled, nor do I hesitate to tell that with the frayed petals

of what were once God's fairest and choicest flowers I dallied till the morning broke. In a word, I threw the reins on Passion's neck, and youth and folly pushed the pace.

I had but one other night to spend, and then farewell to a city I never wished to see again. My bill was paid, my bag was packed, and for a few hours of quietude I sought the billiard room. In the upholstered alcove at the further end of the room I sat me down, and under the solace and subtle influence of a brandy and coffee it was not long till Morpheus claimed me as her own. Long, long I must have slept, for when I awoke the click of the ivory balls had ceased, the lights were still burning, and I thought that I was alone. From the couch on which I had been resting I rose, stretched myself and yawned, and in the language of Solomon, exclaimed, "Oh, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity!" when a laugh struck my ear, such a laugh as I had never heard but once; then it was uttered by a great actor while playing the leading part in "The Sorrows of Satan." Indignant at the laugh, I turned me round and asked, "Who are you?" and when I looked him in the face I beheld my counterpart. He was my own height, had my own complexion, and, so far as I could judge, was of my own age. My first impulse was to have left him; but when eye met eye I felt that I was hypnotised and could not move. Conscious of his power, he smiled as I had never seen man

smile, and laughed again as he had laughed before, and handed me his card. However ill at ease I felt before, Inferno's gates seemed near at hand as I glanced at his card. There was but one word on it, LEEANUS, in the centre, a skull above, a sandglass below, and at either end the crossbones, while at the right hand corner the letters F.R.S.A. gave finish to the card. Like a true artist, he realised the position in which he had placed me, and wishing to put me at my ease, he kindly laid his hand upon my shoulder and said, "Come with me; you have but a few hours to spend in this city; come with me and I will show you something worthy of remembrance." However much I wished to shun LEEANUS, I felt I had to go. A few paces from where I had sat I found myself in a gallery, where hung the works of many of the great masters, ancient and modern. From canvas to canvas he led me, but ever and again he took me back to the Crucifixion, and I would give a world, were it mine, to be able to tell you the beauty LEEANUS saw in that painting. For want of something to say, I remarked, "I know little of Art." Never shall I forget the look he gave me as he uttered the words, "No sinful man need know anything of Art to appreciate the beauty of the Man of Sorrows." The hour of closing had arrived, and I thought that the time had now come when I might part with LEEANUS, now and for ever.

A few moments brought me to my hotel, and, strange to say, when I had gained admission he also entered at my side, and noting my surprise, he again treated me to that sardonic laugh, and added, "I entered here the same night as you, and also leave with you to-morrow; there is but a thin partition between your room and mine. I did my best to make your acquaintance, but at all times you seemed to shun me. To-night, however, I have resolved that we will be better and closer friends." When I had reached my bedroom door I had hopes, for the night at least, that I would part with my strange yet somewhat interesting companion. Not so, however, for as I opened my door, uninvited he entered with me, and with me took a seat, and still he talked of Art. Resolved to make the best of it, I called for some refreshment, and having helped myself, I felt emboldened to ask him, "How long is it since you started painting?" Again that smile, which had something of Heaven and Hell in it, suffused his face as he made reply: "Ever since I remember. The first subject I ever put on canvas was a boy of five years old, learning to lisp his prayer at a fond mother's knee. My next was a picture entitled 'The Mother's Hope; and so on.'" "But surely as you advanced in life you would turn your attention to other subjects." "I did, but strange to say, of all the subjects I ever touched, none even yet gives me such pleasure to look upon as

my earliest efforts, save one, entitled 'The Penitent.' But I have others, which to look upon would make your flesh creep and your hot blood freeze.

"Listen! Could I show you round my gallery you would see a number of pictures hidden from your gaze by a thick curtain that I have hung before them. These are the pictures I refer to, but I never look at them unless I am compelled, as I sometimes am. Do you wonder what can be the nature of them? They have in them all that is mean and selfish, and nothing that is good or God-like. Do you wonder why I keep such pictures? So do I, but I cannot get rid of them, nobody will have them. Destroy them, say you. Often have I tried, and in many different ways, but still they are there. One night particularly, I remember I was all alone, weary of the book I had been reading. I laid it down and thought to have a look at some of the pictures which ever yield me pleasure. Having looked them over, I took a chair by the fire and for a time lost myself in listening to the wind moaning its melancholy music through the keyhole of the gallery door. By and by it changed from a moan to a wierd wail; then from a wail to a shrill shriek; from a shriek to a terrific tempest. Fierce and furious was its voice as it roared down and around the chimney. At length one blast, wilder and fiercer than all that had gone before, burst open the gallery door,

sweeping in its flight, as if it had been a spider's web, the curtains that concealed the pictures from my view. Trembling in every limb, I rose and wrenched them from the wall, trampling the frames to pieces. I piled them on the fire, and to assist their speedy and sure destruction I rushed to a bottle which I knew contained a liquid that would serve the purpose. Forth from its crystal throat I poured into the very heart of the fire this flame-assisting fluid. Higher rose the flames, their colour now changed to that of sulphurous blue; higher still they leapt, till their serpent-pointed tongues lapped the mantelpiece and threatened to destroy the very house itself. I sat watching their annihilation, till the fire had burned low in the grate, and when the last rays had disappeared, I cried as one who had triumphed, 'Gone, gone for ever!' The heat of the room and the severe strain which had been brought to bear on my nervous system were more than I could longer stand. I stretched myself upon a couch and found relief in sleep. I slept long and sound; not even a dream disturbed my heavy slumber. Had it not been that I was called upon to rise I would have lain much longer. Obedient to the call, I started from the couch on which I had been stretched, and walking towards the window, opened wide the shutters, allowing the sunlight of a new and fair day to flow in, flooding the remotest corner of my room. I turned my gaze in the

direction of the fireplace, which had been the cauldron of destruction the night before. Nothing but the cold grey ashes of a burned-out fire was there. I turned to go. In doing so I thought to look up at the wall from which I had torn the pictures the night before, when horror of horrors seized my soul. There they hung, each in its own place, not only unscathed, but brighter in colour, bolder in outline, more distinctly defined than they were before. I cried, I entreated, I implored the hand which had saved them from the flames and hung them up anew, to hide them from my sight for ever. In vain, in vain. When I had ceased speaking and all was still, there came those words from one I could not see: 'Son, Remember—"Never, for ever"—Leeanus.'

Softly and silently rolled out the light of a newborn day, dispelling as it moved the sable garment of night, while I wended my way to the wharf, where lay the ship that was to bear me back to "home and duty." As softly and silently by my side walked Leeanus. Not a word had passed between us until we reached the building through which, the night before, he had led me and showed me the works of the great masters. Here for a moment I halted on my step, and turning to Leeanus, said, "What meant you last night by those fearful pictures you told me you were author of?" In a stage aside whisper I heard him say, "Oh, how dense." Then turning those soul-

searching eyes of his full upon me he exclaimed, "Of a truth there are still to be found those who have eyes that see not and ears that hear not. We are all painters, and the canvas we work upon defies the teeth of Time. He who would taste of all the heaven this life can give, and fill his soul with the hope of the fulness of that heaven which lies beyond the grave, let him paint no pictures save those that are lovely, pure, and true. Nay, more, the very frames with which he binds them must be measured with the foot rule of the 'Carpenter of Nazareth.' And he who would know the opposite of this, let him paint such pictures as those I tried to burn but failed, and not only in this life but in the life to come he will find that the words that pained the rich man of old will be the serpent that will sting him throughout eternity."

The scales fell from my eyes. I stepped on board the steamer, and to chase away the fear which had taken possession of my soul I went below, but in every stroke of the engine that drove the steamer through the foam I heard those awful words, "Son, Remember."

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG POET.

You couldna struck a better time
To send to me a screed o' rhyme ;
Nae bairn you e'er met wi' the mumps
Was half as sair sunk in the dumps
As Baker Lee was when he got
Your much esteemed and valued note.
I'm proud to see that once again
You've seized Pegasus by the mane ;
I hope that you've got spur and whip
And nerve enough to hold your grip.
Through wood and wold, o'er hill and dale
You'll have to ride if you'd prevail ;
By roaring linn, by wimpling stream
You'll sometimes rest to sleep and dream,
But aye the highest peak in view
And to yourself at all times true,
Pass Kings and Queens, and Lords of earth,
And all whose proud boast is their birth—
These are but moths, born for a day,
To show their wings and pass away.
Far other is it with the Bard ;
He knows no death, his ev'ry word
Breathes life to ages yet unborn,
Dispels the mist and greets the morn.
Press on, my son, nor turn aside,
Who wins a race must fearless ride ;
No critic's sneer, no worldling's taunt,
Must ever for a moment daunt ;
Press on, press on, with heart and soul—
The cry will come, " A goal ! a goal ! "

A SONG TO VICTORIA.

Let Communistic spirits prate
And loudly call "Ha, ha!"
We care not for the senseless hate,
Nor does Victoria.
She sits enthroned in honest hearts,
A Queen without a flaw;
No Monarch owns more gracious parts
Than good Victoria.

Come, join with me, ye Britons free,
At home, at sea, abroad;
Fill high the bowl, let every soul
Pledge her who sways the rod.
No despot Monarch is our Queen,
Revered in cot and ha';
The world her like has never seen—
God bless Victoria.

Oh happy land, oh happy race,
Where King or Queen doth fill
As she has filled the lofty place
She fills with honour still.
Oh King of Kings and Lord of Lords!
On this her Jubilee,
Bid nations all lay down their swords,
And put their trust in Thee.

ALLAN M'GAVIN'S LAMENT ON THE DEATH
OF GEORDIE (A FAVOURITE COB).

Aul' Geordie's gane, aul' Geordie's gane
The road we a' maun gang.
But oh it's awfu' sair to pairt
Wi' ane we've kent sae lang.

Nae special breed, I trow, was he
Wha noo lies stiff and stark,
But this I ken, I ne'er had ane
Could work aul' Geordie's wark.

It's twelve years noo, na mair, my frien's,
Since first I brocht him here,
And oft before he'd proved his worth
You thocht that he was dear.

He wasna weeks at Little Sorn
Till a' my neebours roun'
Were speerin' at the Ga'ston Vet.
Is Allan's pony soun' ?

I could hae sell't him o'er and o'er
For mair than what I'd paid,
But cobs like what aul' Geordie was
Are noo but seldom made.

He'd cart, he'd plough, or birl the mill,
Or drive us to the kirk,
In fact, I never saw the job
My dear aul' cob would shirk.

Nae careless, fitless, thochtless beast
Was Geordie in his day,
I never felt the slightest fear
While scourin' doon a brae.

A wee bit cheep was a' he got,
I never used the whip ;
And yet, for a' the years he ran,
I never saw him slip.

.

It's Sabbath day, Jean, lock the door,
We'll bury him the morn ;
But oh, we'll never see his like
Trot in to Little Sorn.

THE WAIL OF THE WEARY TRAMP.

One other milestone left behind
Leaves one mile less to travel ;
Though hard I've tried I've failed to find
A footpath smooth and level.

Still on I trudge and forward press,
Nor shirk what's yet to cover—
E'en though the flag which marks distress
Should daily o'er me hover.

Nightfall will come, then blessed rest ;
When Life's rough journey's over
Old Mother Earth will bare her breast,
And clasp me like a lover !

When I have left the ranks of life,
And entered Death's dark city,
Then farewell sin, and farewell strife,
And farewell pain and pity.

TO MISS J., CANADA.

Though oceans wide between us roll,
 They cannot us divide ;
 The impress made upon my soul
 By you, can never hide.

I see you in the sunny hours,
 I see you in my dreams ;
 Your eyes to me are sweetest flowers,
 Your words are rippling streams.

Oh would that I could ever stray
 By streams as pure and clear,
 Life would be one long Summer day
 If thou wert ever near.

Vain, vain the thought, it cannot be ;
 Our lines lie far apart,
 But I will fondly think of thee
 And bless thee in my heart.

THE BAKING TRADE FIFTY YEARS AGO.

When I think on my 'prentice days,
Days distance canna dim,
I wonder whiles what way that I'm
Sae soun' o' win' and limb.
Sma' marvel that the baking trade
Was lightly thocht o' then,
Nae Fact'ry Acts then biel'd the boys,
Nae Union saved the men.

Frae working hours, baith long and sair,
For wages unca sma',
Frae bearing loads upon their heads
'Twould taen a mule to draw.
We had nae monthly holidays
To jaunt or sport aboot ;
E'en Sabbath morns were swallowed up
Wi' takin' doon the soot.

We werena paid for overtime,
'Bout it we daurna speak,
For fine we kent we wad be tell't
" I'll no need you next week."
Year in year out we slaved awa',
Complaint had been a crime ;
And mony a stalwart youth I've seen
Made auld before his prime.

Those days are gone, thank God they are ;
Pray that they ne'er return,
For if they do, you'll have to own
Man makes himself to mourn.

THE BAKER'S LOST THREEPENCE.

Now that the fire has burned itself low in the grate, and the dying embers are about to resolve themselves into a white ash, let no reader of mine leave me with the impression that in my album I have no places filled with other faces than those of the pilfering type. Did space permit, I could show you many whose memory to me is an inspiration for all that is good and true; aye, and, until the day breaks, will be. Look at this before I shut the album.

A woman whose whole nature was as far apart as the poles asunder from that of pilferers. While not a baker, she was one of the customers with whom I had daily dealings, and her place of business was in Kilmarnock Foregate. Day in, day out, her little window ever exhibited the same stock-in-trade. A few black puddings, a few bowls of potted head, and a few baker's scones; while at the farther end of her little counter sat a black earthenware crock filled with buttermilk. Old and worn, bow-backed, and sorely twisted with rheumatism, she fought with more than woman's strength the cruel fight of life.

Her mode of business (would that we had more of it to-day) was pay the old and take on the new.

What a pleasure to me, and what a pride to her, as morning after morning she put down her three-pence on her little counter, and with a light in her eyes, that rivalled the lustre of her dear, native Killarney, exclaimed, as I put the money into my pocket, "Now, Willie, once more we're as clear as mud." As our friendship ripened, I ventured to remark one morning, "If this goes on, should anything happen, you'll leave this world threepence in my debt." "And though I should," said Mollie, "would you begrudge it? Haven't I been a good customer, Willie?"

'Twas winter, and a severe one, when this bit of banter had passed between Mollie and me. The severity of frosts and thaws had weighed heavily on the well-worn frame of Mollie. 'Twas well on in spring, for the sparrows were making cheery chatter and lovelike play on housetop and gutter, as I passed up the Foregate and made my way to Mollie's door. But the shutter of her little window was still unloosed, and her door was still unlocked. I passed on and served my other customers, and on my way back learned from kindly neighbours that in the silent hours of night, that dark-winged messenger, which, for want of a sweeter and a better name, men call Death, had entered Mollie's cabin; and ere the light of a newborn day had lit the lanes and alleys of the Foregate, Mollie Drumigan was safely borne across the Styx. Dear, old, honest, hardworking Mollie. When I, too,

have crossed the mystic river, when you and I
have met, as meet we will, the threepence you
still owe me will form no barrier to our everlasting
friendship !

ON PRESENTING FLASKS TO VOLUNTEERS
LEAVING FOR THE SEAT OF WAR.

AT A PUBLIC MEETING IN HONOUR OF THE VOLUNTEERS
LEAVING FOR THE SEAT OF WAR, THE AUTHOR, BEING
UNEXPECTEDLY CALLED UPON TO PRESENT TWO FLASKS,
DID SO IN THE FOLLOWING EXTEMPORE LINES.

When Boers' bullets rattle
Across the veldt like hail,
If, in the bloody battle,
Your heart should faint or fail,
Just think on Ga'ston's honour,
'Twill nerve you for the task,
One thought bestow the donor,*
Then taste what's in the flask.

Or if some sodger brither
Lies wounded in the fray,
Oh, dinna staun and swither
An' wonner what ye'll dae ;
Though fierce as hell the tussle,
One favour I now ask,
You'll stop and wat his whistle
Wi' what's within your flask.

R. Young.

AN EPISODE.

A friend of mine who was staying from Saturday to Monday in a hotel at one of our popular watering places on the Clyde, went out after dinner for a stroll, and made choice of the road leading to the heights, so that he might get full advantage of the fresh air and a good view. Nearing the top of the hill, where the road takes a sharp bend, he found to his great delight a garden chair and a very respectable looking old gentleman seated thereon. The usual good day, and the borrowing of a match to light the pipe, put them on speaking terms at once. They chatted freely on various topics for a time, when all of a sudden the attention of both men was riveted on the glory of the setting sun. "What a sight!" exclaimed my young friend. "Aye," said the old gentleman, "some of our artist chaps would give a good lot to be able to put that on canvas." "Yes," said my young friend, "there is only one artist who is capable of doing that." "And who is he?" said the old man. "His name," the young man replied, "is God." "Bah! You're a sentimentalist. Did you ever see God?" "Yes," said my friend, "I have seen Him often." "Now, look here," said the old man, "*Your* Bible tells you that no man can look on God and live." "That," replied my friend,

"is right in one sense and wrong in another ; good day, sir," and thus for the time being they parted. My friend sat still for a little and pencilled the following lines :—

Not only on the pine-clad hills,
Not only on the silver shore,
Not only in the sparkling rills
Do I see God and God adore ;
Even amid the city's noise
I see His face and hear His voice.

Before reaching the hotel he again met the old man and handed him the above lines. Let us hope they did his heart good. As my auld mither used to say, "Ane never kens whaur a blister may licht."

TO GALSTONIANS THE WORLD OVER.

GALSTON AS I FIRST BEHELD IT.

'Tis a long look from the milestone of 1902 back o'er the track of Time's highway to the milestone of 1870. In the autumn of that year I first walked into Galston. Clear and distinct, as it were but yesterday, stands out the impression then made on my young fervid brain when from the end of the "Long Leuk" I first gazed on the beauty of your native valley. Before me stretched the fields of ripened golden grain, swaying in the cool September breeze. To the left beyond, rising from out those "woods and braes" which touched to finest issue the poetic soul of Tannahill, towered the gray turrets of Loudoun Castle. To the right, reaching heavenwards, stood the spear-pointed spire of the Parish Church, and round its base clustered the cottages wherein many of my readers drew their first breath of life, and where their worthy forbears breathed out their latest sigh. And behind and above these, giving background to the finest landscape that I had ever before or since beheld, rose the pine-clad crown of Galston Moor; and far, far away on what then looked to me like the very edge of the round world, the

hoary peak of Loudoun Hill kissed the eastern sky. Nor can I forget, ere leaving the end of the auld clay road, fervently wishing that the Power in whose hand the destiny of all is held would see fit to make this fair scene the field of my future labours. Am I right in surmising that at this point I hear some of the older Galstonians saying, "Ay, ay, it's a fine picture, but it's no' the Ga'ston it wis when we were young." Well, I must confess that in a certain sense that is true, but in another it is not. True it is that the weaver and his loom, the pirn filler and her pirn wheel, the meal hour debates at the foot of the Orchard or the head of the New Street, or the procession doon the bank when butterflies were abroad—a procession made conspicuous by the white flags of industry flapping in the summer breeze—all, all are gone. And true it is that many of the once well known one-storey cottages have thrown aside their thatched roofs and crowned themselves with attics and oriel windows, that the boulder pavements, source of many a bicker 'twixt lairds and Town Councillors, have been uplifted, and the smoothest of granolithic and other modern substances have taken their place. In a word, new men, new modes, and new manners prevail, and though at times inclined to sigh for the good old days we once knew, we console ourselves with the philosophic thought that all things work together for good, both for

the individual and the community, and though the power were ours to call them back, we would not. But, my dear friends, you must not forget there is much that still remains, and I hope will still remain, as when you and generations before you were young and full of hope. The Burnawn still rises where she ever rose, still sings the same sweet song she ever sang, still skips like a joyous-hearted schoolgirl across her jasper floor, and when her short but merry dance is done still leaves us with a rippling laugh. The Irvine still starts her baby crawl far up in the hallowed bog lands of Loudoun Moor, still croons the same soul-soothing melody, as she glides from millwheel to millwheel, as she did in days of yore. Manly-hearted, loving swains and true and trustful maidens still stroll her verdant banks, and, 'neath the starlit dome above, breathe out their tales of love. These, all these and more, remain unchanged, the proud heritage of every child of the Valley, and these, coupled with the sunny hours of childhood, the memory of a mother's love and a father's watchful care, will ever make Galston, and all around it, to her sons and daughters the dearest, sweetest spot on earth.



